

High-Quality Early Care and Education Strengthens Ohio Children and Families


God created the family to be the primary place for educating a child on how he or she is to live. Values are nurtured within the family context (Dt. 6:4-9; Ps. 78:5-8; Pro. 1; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 1:5). However, some parents experience more difficulty with child rearing, lacking resources or support of a spouse to raise their children on a healthy and virtuous path. Services which strengthen children and families, such as high-quality early care and education programs, have the power to transform the lives of disadvantaged children.

High-Quality Early Care and Education Can Strengthen Families

Research shows that high-quality early learning programs can help children get a good start in life, engage parents in their education, and help them grow up to have strong families of their own:

- The Arkansas Better Chance pre-K program improved children's literacy and math scores, with benefits sustained through second grade for literacy, language and math; literacy benefits continued through third grade. Children who attended the program were less likely to be held back by the end of third grade than those who didn't attend any pre-K.¹



 **Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."**

(Proverbs 22:6)

- A longitudinal study of over 1,300 children found children in higher-quality care were better prepared for school at age four compared to those in lower-quality care. At age 15, they still performed slightly above peers in school and had fewer behavior problems.²
- In Ohio, only half of children under the age of five who are at the Federal Poverty Level have access to an early childhood program. Only 29 percent of these programs have received ratings, and only 20 percent of children enrolled are in a program that is high quality. The majority

(71 percent) of children are served by programs that are not rated at all.³

Conclusion

Ohio pastors and ministry leaders already work to strengthen families and help children in their communities. Yet Ohio cannot do better until we improve school outcomes to promote lifelong success for Ohio's children. Investing in early education is necessary to help disadvantaged children live up to their God-given potential, make positive contributions to society, and someday raise strong, healthy families of their own.

1 Jung, K., Barnett, W. S., Hustedt, J. T., Francis, J. (2013, May). Longitudinal effects of the Arkansas Better Chance Program: Findings from first through fourth grade. <http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Arkansas20Longitudinal20Report20May2013n.pdf>

2 Vandell et al. (2010). Do effects of early child care extend to age 15 years? <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2938040/>

3 Groundwork Ohio. Vote for Ohio kids. https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/d114b9_e29bc2a8d6a44e9dbd7e0a8eaa07593a.pdf

Shepherding the Next Generation

Evangelical pastors and ministry leaders calling for biblically-based and effective approaches to strengthen families and communities.

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites five organizations comprised of law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, business executives, pastors, and prominent coaches and athletes who promote solutions that ensure our next generation of Americans will be citizen-ready.

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